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Security Council

Sixty-sixth year

Provisional

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Monday, 14 November 2011, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Cabral	(Portugal)
Members:	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Alzate
	France	Mr. Briens
	Gabon	Mr. Messone
	Germany	Mr. Berger
	India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
	Lebanon	Mr. Assaf
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zhukov
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Tatham
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

Central African region

Report of the Secretary-General on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas pursuant to Security Council press statement (S/2011/693)

First report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for Central Africa (S/2011/704)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Central African region

Report of the Secretary-General on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas pursuant to Security Council press statement (S/2011/693)

First report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for Central Africa (S/2011/704)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of the Central African Republic and of South Sudan to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Abou Moussa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Téte António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite General Louis Sylvain-Goma, Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2011/693, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas pursuant to Security Council press statement. I wish also to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2011/704, the first report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa.

I now give the floor to Mr. Moussa.

Mr. Moussa: I would like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the current month.

It is an honour for me to address the Council and introduce the report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/693) on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas. The report assesses the threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the regional and international efforts to address it, particularly those made by the United Nations.

This is the second report on the LRA since 2006. Members will recall that on 21 July 2011, Assistant Secretary-General Zerihoun briefed the Council on the transnational threat posed by the group in the Central African region, particularly in remote areas of the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan.

Over the years, the LRA's brutal and indiscriminate attacks on civilians have resulted in deaths, abductions, looting and the displacement of some 440,000 persons, who are today displaced or living as refugees in the countries affected. Although it does not pursue a political agenda, the group continues to perpetrate serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law with impunity, and to instil fear and terror among local populations. The affected countries' limited capacity to control their porous borders, which stretch over vast areas, means that the group can move easily, crossing the borders of the affected countries.

The toll has been particularly heavy in communities in the Haut and Bas Uélé districts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where 335,000 persons have been displaced due to the LRA. The majority are being generously hosted by local communities, which already have only limited access to basic infrastructure, such as schools and health care. The humanitarian situation has deteriorated further this year, with 49,000 persons newly displaced in the Democratic Republic of the Congo alone during the first half of the year. Constrained humanitarian access due to insecurity continues to be a significant challenge, and the remoteness of and logistical hurdles involved in reaching many locations make operations costly and time-consuming.

Recently, the Governments of the LRA-affected countries have taken important steps to address the threat, including through coordinated military operations. However, the national security forces of those countries lack the full range of resources and capabilities in areas such as logistics, intelligence-

gathering and air mobility to effectively deal with the problem on their own as well as extend their authority throughout their respective territories, protect the civilian populations and enforce the rule of law.

Over the years, the affected countries, the African Union, the European Union, the United Nations and the wider international community, for that matter, have made a significant investment in efforts to address the LRA threat, including through the provision of troops and logistical support. It is crucial that we collectively remain engaged on this important issue.

In this context, over the years the quest to engage in further analysis regarding the LRA has produced much in the way of results. Therefore, additional concerted actions that yield concrete results on the ground for the communities living with the consequences of this crisis must continue.

In our view, the military operations being conducted by the Member States affected should be intelligence-driven and targeted, and ensure the containment rather than the dispersal of LRA elements in order to maximize their impact. In that regard, the recent deployment by the United States of 100 combat-equipped military personnel to provide training and advisory support to national armies in the Central African region that are carrying out operations against the LRA should enhance the efforts already being undertaken by the Governments of the affected countries.

In addition, while LRA combatants attempting to leave the group face serious risks and challenges, the Governments of the affected countries should continue their efforts, in collaboration with their partners, to facilitate the defection of LRA combatants and ensure that they are able to participate in effective reintegration programmes.

The Secretary-General welcomes the African Union's initiative to develop a regional strategy to address the LRA, as it provides an important new opportunity for coordinated action by the affected countries. The United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) is continuing to provide planning support for the modalities of the strategy, including military planning for the regional intervention force and, together with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and humanitarian partners, is helping to develop a plan for the protection of civilians.

Meanwhile, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report that is before the Council, the United Nations system is taking a number of actions aimed at addressing the LRA problem in a more effective and coherent manner through its political, peacekeeping, human rights, humanitarian and development efforts in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and Uganda. In that connection, steps have been taken to further strengthen coordination and synergy among the United Nations entities, including with the UNOAU and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA). In addition, the United peacekeeping operations in the region are taking further steps to strengthen civilian protection, within their mandates and capabilities, in strategic locations in the LRA-affected areas, so as to help deter attacks against civilians and facilitate humanitarian operations.

UNOCA, in its capacity as the United Nations political focal point for the LRA in the region, and in close cooperation with all relevant United Nations presences on the ground, will continue to enhance the linkages in the work of the United Nations and other partners and facilitate coordination and information-sharing among them. Meanwhile, I will continue to engage the United Nations presence in the region with a view to articulating the modalities for coordinated support to the African Union regional initiative and for the affected countries.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to our partners for their continued efforts in addressing the LRA threat. These efforts should be strengthened and sufficiently supported by all concerned so that they can be sustained in order to help eradicate the threat posed by the LRA.

The President: I thank Mr. Moussa for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. António.

Mr. António (*spoke in French*): It is with great pleasure that I take the floor for the second time in the Security Council to address the issue of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which is of great concern to the African Union (AU), as members of the Council are aware. The inclusion of this item on its agenda demonstrates the Security Council's commitment to finding a solution to this problem, which has assumed an alarming regional dimension, as was just stressed by Mr. Moussa.

On behalf of the African Union Commission, I thank you, Sir, for your kind invitation to our organization to participate in this meeting. The convening of this debate under Portugal's presidency is further proof of the extent to which your country, close as it is to Africa, is concerned with the fate of the continent and its inhabitants.

I take this opportunity to commend the Secretary-General on his very comprehensive report (S/2011/693). I welcome the presence here today of the Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, Mr. Abou Moussa, whose briefing shed a bright light on the situation in Central Africa, in particular the range of issues related to the LRA. We wish him every success in accomplishing his noble mission.

I also welcome the presence of Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma, Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States.

The AU involvement in resolving the security issues created in Central Africa by the LRA can be traced back to its special session on the consideration and resolution of conflicts in Africa, held in Tripoli, Libya, on 31 August 2009. In the action plan adopted at the session, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union agreed, inter alia, to redouble their efforts, including military efforts, to neutralize the LRA and to put an end to its atrocities and destabilizing activities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan and the Central African Republic.

The fifteenth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held in Kampala, Uganda, in July 2010, reiterated the commitment of the African Union and asked the Commission to organize as soon as possible action-oriented consultations among countries affected by the activities of the LRA and all other interested parties in order to facilitate regional coordinated action to address the threat posed by that group. In that context, regional ministerial meetings were held on the activities of the LRA in Bangui, Central African Republic, on 13 and 14 October 2010, and in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 8 June 2011.

The seventeenth African Union Summit, held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, in July 2011 welcomed in particular the initiatives taken by the Commission. The meeting lent its full support to the decisions taken, and asked the AU Peace and Security Council to speedily authorize the planned operation and all its components, including the regional intervention force, the joint operations centre and the joint coordination mechanism. The conference requested the United Nations and other AU partners to support the initiative to protect the affected civilian populations, including through financial and logistical support.

In following up on these decisions, the AU Commission has undertaken the necessary consultations with the countries concerned to designate a special envoy for the LRA. The special envoy will have to ensure political coordination and overall strategy. The AU Commission also established an integrated planning team, comprised of officers of the Commission and of affected countries, to conduct detailed operational planning. The team has undertaken a series of activities, in particular developing a mission plan for ongoing operational procedures, as well as force generation and finalizing the legal framework and the protection of civilians strategy document.

On 27 September, the Commission submitted an interim report to the Peace and Security Council. The Council took note of the efforts made and asked the Commission to submit as soon as possible final planning documents so that the mandate could be adopted. The Peace and Security Council will meet on 21 November to consider the draft operational mandate submitted to it. In the meantime, the Commission is striving to finalize arrangements for role-sharing among the affected countries so as to mobilize support for capacity--building of the countries affected by LRA attacks and to ensure the availability of financial, material and logistical resources necessary for the regional cooperation initiative.

In that context, the Commission has pursued consultations with the European Union on financing certain components of the initial phase of the operation. I welcome the European Union's willingness to contribute to the success of the AU's efforts. At the same time, other contributions will be vital to allow for the effective implementation of the operation. The Commission is in contact with other partners, particularly the United States, in order to mobilize additional support and ensure the closest possible coordination of efforts to neutralize the LRA and put an end to its activities.

The Commission is also in contact with the United Nations Secretariat to follow up on the conclusions of the earlier meeting of the Security Council on the LRA. The AU is grateful to the United Nations for its renewed commitment to supporting our implementation of the regional LRA initiative.

The AU anti-LRA regional cooperation initiative is an important action. It is the object of great interest and expectations on the part of countries affected by LRA atrocities, as well as of the attention of foreign partners. It complements and gives new impetus to the earlier efforts of the States concerned. This meeting of the Council is therefore opportune to take stock of efforts already made and to maintain and to enhance the mobilization of the international community.

The President: I thank Mr. António for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Sylvain-Goma.

Mr. Sylvain-Goma (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset, Sir, to welcome your assumption of the Council presidency this month, and to thank the Ambassador of Gabon for his efforts to facilitate my presence at this debate. We in Central Africa are proud of the establishment of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) in Libreville, and we welcome the invitation of the Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to this debate to discuss the development of the Office's activities.

With regard to the issues before the Security Council, I shall very briefly touch on a few aspects in connection with the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), while speaking at greater length on the Gulf of Guinea. I would also like to take advantage of our presence in the Council to make some comments on the problems that concern us and efforts we are carrying out at ECCAS that we believe could benefit from cooperation with UNOCA.

With regard to the LRA, ECCAS is aware of the developments that have just been recounted here. ECCAS has been involved in various meetings organized by the African Union, especially at Bangui. That has made it possible to take note of the developments in the activities between the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and what is now South Sudan. The observer of the African Union has just spoken about possible developments, namely, the possibility of establishing a force and setting up an operations centre in order to put in place a framework for political follow-up. Final decisions will soon be taken by the Peace and Security Council, as the observer of the African Union has also just pointed out.

How those issues affect the Economic Community of Central African States should be seen in the context of the fact that all of us are concerned about peace and security problems on the continent. For ECCAS in particular, however, they are of concern given that the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic are members of the Community. Given that fact, there can be no holding back when it comes to engaging on those issues. A mere look into the situation bears that out.

In 2008, ECCAS undertook its first activities in the field by setting up the Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX), which began its work on 1 January 2009. MICOPAX's efforts led the European Union assessment missions to determine that several positive steps had been taken, but that there were also concerns. In an official statement, the Central African Republic expressed its satisfaction with the cooperation that had taken place, in particular in connection with MICOPAX's ability to control certain aspects that could have jeopardized the presidential election.

The work of ECCAS with the Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic has now reached the mid-point, making it possible for us to address two concerns. In no particular order, the first has to do with the desire of the Government of the Central African Republic to acknowledge that more than 20 years of peacekeeping missions on its territory had not been enough to focus on the training of the Forces armées centrafricaines (FACA). Secondly, ECCAS member States believe that the time has come to ensure that the forces of the Central African Republic can strengthen their capacity to take control of the security situation throughout the country.

Taking those two concerns into consideration, MICOPAX officials and the ECCAS Council of Ministers took the decision to begin the gradual drawdown of the Mission, while continuing, in the two following years, the capacity-building previously agreed. Three hundred and ninety-nine force members will receive training in 2012. That will be reviewed

prior to the end of the mandate given to the mission by ECCAS, in 2013. In that context, given that developments in the setting up by ECCAS, through the structures for regional brigades, require a great deal of caution, we will endeavour to ensure that the emphasis continues to be placed first on MICOPAX, bearing in mind the goals to which I have just referred in the area of training. We will also focus on the training of the armed forces against the backdrop of the contribution they will have to make in the context of the regional force that is still being put together to deal with the LRA.

It is of course true that things are continuing to evolve and that the situation in Central Africa will continue to be of concern to ECCAS heads of State. As the recently conducted African Union assessment mission suggested, if constraints necessitated that senior political officials consider a different approach from the one I have just outlined, then indeed other decisions may have to be taken, for peace has no price.

Those are the comments I wished to make on this issue. In brief, the current capacity of ECCAS imposes constraints on it in connection with carrying out the peacebuilding Mission in Central Africa in accordance with the current mandate, including gradually drawing down MICOPAX prior to its full withdrawal in 2013. However, ECCAS stands ready to follow up any measures that may be called for by the African Union's senior political leaders.

The President: I thank Mr. Sylvain-Goma for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Abou Moussa to present the report (S/2011/704) on the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa.

Mr. Abou Moussa (*spoke in French*): I would first of all like to thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to present to the Security Council the first report (S/2011/704) of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA). I would also like to welcome the presence in the Chamber of Their Excellencies the Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Ambassador and Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations. That further demonstrates the interest in cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations.

The report before the Council presents the process of setting up the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa in Libreville, Gabon, and underscores the difficulties encountered during the launching phase. It also notes the practical provisions made for the effective functioning of the Office. In that regard, I would like to renew the thanks of the United Nations to the Gabon Government for the cooperation given to UNOCA to facilitate its operation. The report further indicates the vital support given to the Office by various entities of the United Nations system, in particular the Secretariat, the logistical base in Brindisi and the United Nations bodies in the Central African subregion. Without that support, it would have been difficult for the Office to achieve the current results.

(*spoke in English*)

The establishment of UNOCA follows the willingness of the leaders of Central Africa to find appropriate solutions to the conflicts that have affected a number of countries in the subregion in the past. In that regard, the leaders of the subregion worked closely with the United Nations to establish the Office on 1 January 2011, and subsequently to inaugurate it on 2 March. On 11 March, the Secretary-General appointed me as his Special Representative for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA. I assumed my functions on 24 May and arrived in Libreville on 15 June.

Since my arrival in Libreville, I have focused on three key issues: first, the operationalization of the Office; secondly, courtesy visits to the authorities of the subregion to familiarize myself with the key challenges confronting the subregion; and thirdly, taking initial steps towards enhancing coordination among the United Nations entities in the subregion.

I am pleased to report that the Office is now fully operational and that we have started implementing its mandate. About 87 per cent of the staff have assumed their duties in Libreville, and the remaining outstanding recruitment and operational tasks will be completed soon. Besides those actions, I have engaged in a process of consultations with the Heads of State and Government, the representatives of subregional institutions and of the United Nations system, and other partners in the subregion.

The objectives of those consultations were twofold, namely, to obtain a broader awareness of the nature of the peace and security and other challenges confronting the subregion, and to better explain the

mandate of UNOCA to the region's leaders and other stakeholders, as well as to obtain their perspectives on and their expectations of the implementation of that mandate. I have visited all ECCAS member States except one, which I plan to visit in the near future. I also visited the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa and the United Nations Office to the African Union.

Following those consultations, UNOCA brought together representatives of the United Nations system in Central Africa at a regional seminar held in Libreville in October. The seminar provided an opportunity for the United Nations system to agree on how to align its support to countries in Central Africa in a more coordinated manner, with UNOCA playing a coordinating role. In that regard, we are working with the United Nations Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, in Yaoundé, and the Central Africa Subregional Office of UN-Women, in Kigali, which have agreed to strengthen cooperation with UNOCA.

Following consultations with leaders and other stakeholders in Central Africa, the following emerged as the key challenges facing the subregion: cross-border security and the activities of armed groups such as the Lord's Resistance Army, the circulation of small arms and light weapons, drugs and human trafficking, transnational organized crime, youth unemployment and stability, the illegal exploitation of natural resources, piracy and maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, the impact of the conflict in Libya, terrorism, election-related disputes, and the strengthening of the institutional capacity of subregional organizations and their peace and security mechanisms, in particular those of the Economic Community of Central Africa States.

Regarding the issue of small arms and light weapons, it is noteworthy that States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa signed the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and All Parts and Components That Can Be Used for Their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly — known as the Kinshasa Convention — in Brazzaville during the Committee's thirty-first ministerial meeting. UNOCA intends to work closely with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, in collaboration with ECCAS, to promote the ratification of the Convention with a view to ensuring its early entry into force and implementation.

The issue of piracy and maritime security remains of great concern. Apart from seizing vessels, criminals are carrying out other unlawful activities, including poaching and the use of the Gulf as a hub for the trans-shipment of narcotics. Recognizing the importance of enhanced cross-border security in that area, the countries of the subregion adopted the Framework to Secure the Gulf of Guinea and a protocol creating the Regional Coordination Centre for Maritime Security in Central Africa in Kinshasa in 2009. The subregion has been subdivided into zones. The countries of Zone D — Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe — where significant acts of piracy and terrorism have been reported, have reached a technical agreement on the modalities of conducting maritime security operations and surveillance.

On the same issue, I am in close contact with my colleague, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa, in Dakar, to better coordinate our respective actions, and those of the two subregions, in response to that growing challenge. As the Council certainly knows, an assessment mission that was recently deployed to West and Central Africa by the Secretary-General is expected to come up with recommendations for a coordinated strategy to improve security in the Gulf of Guinea.

Lastly, the Security Council is equally aware of the seriousness of the persisting threat to peace and security in Central Africa posed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The report of the Secretary-General that I have just introduced (S/2011/693) describes the actions undertaken at various levels to fight against the LRA.

The fallout in Libya presents new challenges for countries in the subregion, particularly Chad and the Central African Republic. The vulnerability of returnees, the loss of revenue from remittances and the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons by armed groups, including the LRA, are of grave concern. There are concerns that stolen weapons from Libya could fuel criminality and undermine the progress achieved in the subregion.

As most of the issues noted during my consultations with Heads of State and Government and

other stakeholders are also of concern to the secretariat of the Economic Community of Central Africa States, I am working in close collaboration with the Secretary-General of that institution. Desk-to-desk meetings are also taking place, bringing together experts of UNOCA and the ECCAS secretariat to examine specific questions of common concern. The subregion would benefit tremendously from United Nations support to national and subregional actors in their efforts to address the causes of conflict and to put in place durable mechanisms for sustainable peace. The report before the Council emphasizes the need to enhance our support through existing peace and security mechanisms in Central Africa and to better coordinate our collective efforts to ensure coherence and comprehensiveness in our support to the region.

There are three key factors working in our favour. The first is the political will shown by subregional authorities to collectively address the challenges in Central Africa. We need to continue to reinforce this political will by, among other things, enhancing our support in the subregion to address underlying challenges such as poverty and unemployment. In that regard, UNOCA will work closely with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in the subregion.

The second factor is the existence of a regional architecture for peace and security, comprising a set of institutions and mechanisms, including ECCAS, which serve as the basis for our support. In that regard, also, we are going to maintain close cooperation with subregional organizations, particularly ECCAS.

Finally, the establishment of UNOCA, tasked with facilitating the coordination of peace initiatives in the subregion, is generating new momentum and creating strong expectations for a more robust approach to dealing with the challenges that the subregion is confronting. UNOCA will continue to work closely with the leaders of the subregion, other United Nations missions and key partners in the subregion. Needless to say that UNOCA will, in addition, continue to actively follow developments on the two issues that I have already mentioned, namely, the LRA and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate UNOCA's gratitude for the support of the United Nations system as a whole, and to the Security Council for its strong and continued support of our efforts.

The President: I thank Mr. Moussa for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to members of the Security Council.

Mr. Messone (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this meeting on the two reports of the Secretary-General on, respectively, the United Nations Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), nine months after its opening, and on the troubling threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Central Africa and the Great Lakes region (S/2011/704 and S/2011/693). I would also like to thank and commend Mr. Abou Moussa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOCA, for his briefing. I also welcome the presence and participation of Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma, Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), in our debate. I also thank Ambassador Téte António for his briefing. Lastly, I welcome the participation of the Permanent Representatives of the Central African Republic and the Republic of South Sudan in our meeting.

I would like to reverse the order of topics in our debate today and start with UNOCA. I should like to reiterate my country's full willingness to continue to support the Office, as well as to express our appreciation for the work accomplished by the Office in the past few months. We welcome the different contacts that Mr. Abou Moussa has undertaken with States in the subregion, with organizations and with other stakeholders in Central Africa. Those contacts will make it possible to assess situations on the ground, but also to better develop United Nations support strategies for countries, given the challenges to peace and security in Central Africa. Mr. Moussa has just summed up what those challenges are, as perceived by the authorities in the subregion.

In supporting the creation of UNOCA, ECCAS heads of State and Government expressed the hope that, like its counterpart in West Africa, the Office would contribute to implementing an integrated approach to challenges to peace, security and development in Central Africa. The Office should also facilitate coordination between the United Nations and subregional organizations.

In the presidential statement of 31 October 2002 (S/PRST/2002/31), the Security Council, for its part, sought the same objective, emphasizing capacity-

building of countries in the subregion, conflict prevention through mediation and good offices and economic integration. As Mr. Moussa said, the subregion is implementing a number of initiatives, which UNOCA has been called upon to support.

You would agree with us, Mr. President, as we have already emphasized, that a mandate of this scope requires substantial financial, human and logistical resources. UNOCA will also need enough time to grasp the regional context to do a good job dealing with very complex and delicate issues having to do with peace and security in Central Africa. In that regard, we welcome the attention that UNOCA has already paid to pressing questions, such as the electoral process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the issue of the destabilizing circulation of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa.

The disturbing development of piracy, which affects the States of the Gulf of Guinea, is a new challenge for Central Africa and a threat to security and navigation and maritime activities. UNOCA must support the fight against that scourge and do so in the context of an integrated strategy and in coordination with the Office for West Africa and the concerned agencies of the United Nations, subregional organizations such as ECCAS, the Economic Community of West African States, the Gulf of Guinea Commission and States themselves.

Finally, the Office should support subregional efforts to reform the security sector in countries emerging from conflict. Additionally, in taking up coordination and administrative functions of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, the Office should contribute to promoting good governance and relations of trust between States.

With respect to the Lord's Resistance Army, the LRA continues to be a serious threat to security in the Great Lakes and Central African region. Civilian populations, including women and children, are the leading victims of the deadly violence of that and other armed groups. Humanitarian action is impeded in countries affected by new waves of violence by the LRA. Villages and towns are often targeted in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in South Sudan. Joseph Kony and his combatants are operating in the north-eastern part of the Central African Republic. We know that the weakness of the army of the Central African Republic, with its inability to cover the entire territory, creates fertile soil for the LRA.

Given the defiance of the LRA, the international community must step up its pressure in order to put an end to LRA attacks against civilian populations, stop the recruitment, abduction and use of children, and secure the release of women, children and other non-combatants held by the LRA.

We would like to commend the actions against the threats and violence of the LRA conducted by the military forces of the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of South Sudan and Uganda. Similarly, we welcome the commitment and initiatives of the African Union against the LRA, which it calls a terrorist group, not only in terms of civilian protection but in building the capacities of States. Gabon would like to take this opportunity to welcome the support that the European Union is giving to the African Union to that end. These efforts, by States and by the African Union, should be strongly supported by the international community.

For its part, Gabon participated in the ministerial meetings on the LRA recently held in October 2010 in Bangui and in June 2011 in Addis Ababa. Gabon welcomes the establishment of the regional intervention force and the Joint Information Operations Centre. These bodies are part of a coordinated regional strategy developed by States affected by LRA violence, in cooperation with the African Union, the United Nations and other partners. They should certainly be operational by 2012.

We would like to thank bilateral and multilateral partners for their contribution to these initiatives, especially the United States of America, France, the United Nations and, as I mentioned earlier, the European Union. My delegation would also like to welcome the personal commitment of President Barack Obama and the support of the United States Administration through its LRA disarmament support strategy. My country welcomes the deterrence actions and actions to protect civilians conducted by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and by MICOPAX, the Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic. Here we also wish to commend the commitment of the units of MONUSCO, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding

Office in the Central African Republic that have continued to work closely together on that issue.

In that context, the United Nations must be at the centre of a strategy comprised of the following elements: protection of civilian populations, re-establishment of regional stability, support to States by building their military capabilities, and strengthened action to put a definitive end to the threat of the LRA.

Gabon also wishes to reaffirm its commitment to the fight against impunity for the perpetrators of massive crimes and violence. We call for the execution of the arrest warrants issued in 2005 by the International Criminal Court for the main LRA leaders, in particular Joseph Kony and his two commanders who are still active: Okot Odhiambo and Dominic Ongwen. As recommended by the Secretary-General and by the Council, combating the LRA must be a priority of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, and that Office must continue its cooperation with ECCAS, the African Union and the States affected by the matter.

Finally, my delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General, who has taken the initiative to establish UNOCA, as well as members of the Council who supported it. We also wish to endorse the presidential statement that will be adopted at the end of our debate.

Mr. Tatham (United Kingdom): Thank you, Sir, for scheduling this important briefing. Let me begin by thanking Special Representative Mr. Abou Moussa for his briefing and, moreover, for the valuable contribution he makes to peace and security in the Central African region. I also thank His Excellency Mr. António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, and General Sylvain-Goma, Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), for their briefings. I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representatives of the Republic of South Sudan and the Central African Republic. As the report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/693) makes clear, engagement by the Governments of countries affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) is vital to addressing the threat presented by the LRA.

As Mr. Abou Moussa has just reminded us, the LRA continues to pose a substantial threat to regional security in Central Africa. The atrocities that they commit have serious humanitarian and human rights consequences. The United Kingdom condemns in the strongest terms their continued violations of humanitarian law and their human rights abuses, which have resulted in the displacement of 440,000 people across the region. The LRA's campaign has the potential to cause further instability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and the Central African Republic, and to hamper the efforts of those countries to progress towards peace and security. Removing the threat of the LRA is important in terms of creating and consolidating a secure and stable environment in the affected countries.

Tackling the threat posed by a group that, as the Special Representative has pointed out, has no obvious political agenda is a particular challenge that requires strong commitment and effective coordination among all of those acting in the region: the United Nations and its missions, the African Union (AU) and the Governments of the affected States, supported by the international community.

I recognize the significant efforts that the militaries of Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and the Central African Republic have undertaken to pursue and apprehend the remaining LRA fighters. It is important, of course, to record that all action against the LRA should be conducted in compliance with international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law. And it is essential that the protection of civilians is a clear component of any military operation — a point already emphasized by the Permanent Representative of Gabon.

I am pleased that the Secretary-General's report has highlighted the many ways in which United Nations peacekeeping operations have worked with the affected countries to protect civilians from this ongoing threat. I believe that the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) could enhance its effort by promoting regional programming by United Nations agencies and missions in support of humanitarian operations and the reintegration of combatants. Facilitating high-level liaison among heads of the affected States, heads of United Nations missions and the AU's Special Envoy for the LRA, and collecting and disseminating data would help United Nations missions to protect civilians against LRA atrocities.

Turning to UNOCA's wider role, I am pleased to note that UNOCA's first six months have seen it put on a sure footing. I join Special Representative Abou Moussa in thanking the Government of Gabon for its support in facilitating the launch and operations of UNOCA.

The Secretary-General's report (S/2011/704) rightly points out the financial constraints under which UNOCA will need to operate. It is therefore essential that UNOCA delivers against a limited number of prioritized objectives, particularly while in its early stages. Tackling the LRA is primary among those, but it is also welcome to see efforts to tackle piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, efforts which have the clear and strong support of the Security Council.

I am also pleased to see that upstream conflict prevention will be central to UNOCA's work. I hope that best practices from the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) will be adopted by UNOCA in its efforts to pre-empt tensions in the region and mediate between parties. So I am highly encouraged by what Special Representative Abou Moussa has said about his close cooperation with his colleague, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOAU.

In order for the Council to effectively review and support the efforts of the United Nations, AU and affected countries, we must be well informed. To that end, we would like to request that the Secretary-General report to the Council before the end of May next year regarding opportunities for improved information-sharing among the AU, LRA-affected States and United Nations missions, and outlining the role of UNOCA in coordinating activity against the LRA.

Finally, I thank Council members for their support for the presidential statement which the United Kingdom delegation has prepared and which we will shortly be adopting.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India): Like others, I would like to thank you, Sir, for organizing this meeting to discuss the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and the threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). I also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Abou Moussa, for his comprehensive briefings, and Ambassador Téte António and General Louis Sylvain-Goma for their presentations.

After decades of instability and conflict, the countries in the Central African region have now embarked on a process of moving towards democracy and development. The Governments have shown tremendous resolve and determination to handle their problems, individually and collectively, through regional cooperation and with the assistance of the international community, led by the United Nations. Several countries are conducting democratic elections largely on their own. They have undertaken economic reforms and initiated measures to improve the capacity of their security and police forces.

In this transition process, it is natural that countries are faced with many challenges, including from the remnants of past conflicts. It is critical that the international community continues to assist the nation-building efforts of the Central African countries. It is also important that international assistance not impinge on national ownership and the sovereign functions of States.

With its mandate to help prevent conflict and consolidate peace in Central Africa, UNOCA has started its work on a positive note. The countries in the region, as stated in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/704), have warmly welcomed the establishment of UNOCA and have started taking active interest in its work. UNOCA's activities during the past six months have been able to create a positive environment, paving the way for regional cooperation on important issues.

The region faces several challenges, such as the proliferation of small arms, organized crime, drug trafficking, illegal exploitation of mineral resources, governance issues, high unemployment, internally displaced persons and refugees and of course, the problems associated with the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). As stated in the report of the Secretary-General, the conflict in Libya has exacerbated some of those problems.

The effective functioning of UNOCA would greatly help the United Nations, including this Council, in assisting the countries to address those issues, many of which have a regional dimension and require a regional approach for their lasting resolution. The focus should be on finding local solutions to problems involving governance, capacity-building, security and transnational crime.

Towards that end, creating synergy with other United Nations offices, such as the United Nations Office for West Africa and the United Nations Office to the African Union, would greatly benefit UNOCA's work. Those United Nations offices should work closely with the African Union (AU) and subregional organizations, such as the Economic Community of Central African States, and channel regional initiatives more effectively into their programmes. It is necessary that the United Nations offices and missions, including UNOCA, be adequately staffed and resourced if they are to effectively and efficiently implement their mandates.

Given the adverse impact of past conflicts on the social fabric of the countries in the region, the threat of the LRA cannot be neglected. The measures taken by Uganda in cooperation with its neighbours have helped to contain the problem. Nevertheless, the LRA, with its leadership at large, continues to pose a serious threat to peace and security, particularly for innocent civilians, given its ability to move freely and carry out operations across borders in several countries of the region. The inhuman acts inflicted by the LRA on local communities have resulted in the large-scale displacement and uprooting of communities. While long-term solutions to this problem are to extend the reach of the law enforcement agencies of States and focus on socio-economic development in the affected areas, it is important that serious efforts be made to eliminate the remaining active groups and bring the leadership of the LRA to justice.

While UNOCA has a critical role to play in coordinating United Nations efforts to assist national Governments in their fight against armed groups, including the LRA, it is necessary for the international community to strengthen the capacity of the countries in the region, particularly that of their armed forces and other law enforcement agencies, to take the lead in combating the LRA. In that connection, we welcome the initiatives of the AU to appoint a special envoy for the LRA and establish a regional intervention force. We have already seen in the African Union Mission in Somalia that the AU is capable of mounting such a force with the assistance of the international community, and hope that those initiatives will bear fruit soon.

We have also taken note of the individual efforts of several countries to assist the countries in the region in building capacity to fight the LRA. Such assistance should be apolitical in nature and respect national sovereignty and policy, as well as operational matters. In addition, helping the affected communities to overcome the trauma of displacement and social stigma should also become an immediate priority. It is important that the affected communities be reintegrated through the provision of necessary resources.

In conclusion, let me state that long-term socio-economic development and broad-based inclusive political systems are the key to addressing the threat posed by armed groups including the LRA. Towards that end, India is committed to enhancing cooperation with its African partners, including through the African Union and other regional and subregional organizations. We have announced credit lines of $5 billion for the next three years, as well as a number of projects designed for human resource development in African countries, including the Pan-African e-Network Project. These projects will strengthen national capacities to meet the development needs and aspirations that would also help address security problems, including the LRA.

Finally, we will support the draft presidential statement that has been proposed.

Mr. Berger (Germany): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Abou Moussa for his briefings. I also thank Mr. António and Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma for their statements.

First, I would like to respond to the report (S/2011/693) on the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Secondly, I will add some remarks on the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA).

With regard to the LRA, which continues to pose a serious threat to regional security, we concur with the view that a multifaceted and balanced approach is needed to tackle the problem. Military efforts carried out in compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law are required, as are non-military efforts, including better coordinated and enhanced humanitarian aid and development measures. Germany has given humanitarian assistance since 2009 to internally displaced persons, refugees and other vulnerable communities in LRA-affected areas in South Sudan, the Central African Republic and the north and east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We stand ready to continue our support. We commend the efforts of the United States to work with the regional militaries, but it is understood that the

countries of the region need to take the lead in resolving the LRA problem.

We encourage the regional Governments to strengthen their cooperation at the State, military and community levels and to assume the primary responsibility to protect civilians. Enhanced disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, as well as disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement (DDRRR) efforts, should also be given priority in order to encourage defections from the LRA. In that context, amnesty based on international standards, reintegration and the rehabilitation of rank and file ex-combatants should be pursued in a targeted and coordinated manner.

We hail the establishment of standard operating procedures by the Uganda People's Defence Force for the reception and handover of women and children separated from the LRA to ensure their care and repatriation. The national security forces of the region should implement similar procedures, in cooperation with the relevant United Nations agencies. Children and women remain most vulnerable. Continuous human rights violations by the LRA, especially affecting children and women, remain of deep concern to us.

More focus and support should be given to the LRA-affected areas in the Central African Republic, where local military and United Nations capacity is limited. At the regional level, the leadership role of the African Union (AU) in coordinating efforts against the LRA is crucial. We advocate the swift appointment of the AU special envoy for the LRA to strengthen regional cooperation and donor support.

We also encourage the African Union to take forward its military planning for the AU initiative and to share information on the design of the military component and its purpose. We welcome the efforts undertaken by the United Nations to work in support of the African Union and its efforts to enhance cooperation among the United Nations missions, United Nations offices and all relevant actors in the region.

We notably support the intensified inter-mission cooperation between the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) to repatriate former LRA elements and MONUSCO's successful contribution to DDRRR efforts.

Enhanced regional radio stations and community-led networks in the LRA-affected areas are important steps to improve the protection of civilians, which is paramount in the response to the LRA. In that context, we also appreciate the strengthening of United Nations peacekeeping capacities, within the missions' mandates and capabilities in strategic locations, as already envisaged by Special Representative Hilde Johnson in connection with the deployment of UNMIS troops to Western Equatoria state, South Sudan.

Ensuring efficient information-sharing between the missions and the relevant partners must be a priority. We encourage the United Nations to identify further opportunities to help address the LRA threat in a more coherent and comprehensive manner. We welcome UNOCA's role as the United Nations political focal point for the LRA. More specific information on UNOCA's role in coordinating activities against the LRA would be useful. This request also figures in the draft presidential statement submitted by the delegation of the United Kingdom, which we fully support.

Focusing finally on UNOCA's overall mandate and first activities, I would like to reiterate our support for the Regional Office and its contribution to conflict prevention in Central Africa. The broad range of requests for assistance from the region stresses the need to prioritize UNOCA's work programme and to concentrate on specific activities. It will remain crucial to build on existing expertise and mechanisms and to work closely with all relevant actors in order to avoid duplication. Priority should be given to contributing to early warning and early political action; to strengthening the capacities of the Economic Community of Central African States, including in the areas of mediation, capacity-building and skills for addressing cross-border security threats such as the LRA; and to supporting United Nations missions and agencies to intensify their regional cooperation.

We consider it to be vital for member States of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to further strengthen the subregional organization and to foster their regional cooperation. We hope that the next ECCAS summit, to be held in N'Djamena in January 2012, will contribute to that end. We commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General's support to ECCAS in that regard.

Mr. Briens (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mr. Abou Moussa, Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), for his briefing on the initial work of the Office and his report on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas (S/2011/693). I welcome Mr. Sylvain-Goma, Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and thank him for his briefing. I also welcome Ambassador António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations.

I will discuss two points. The first is related to the work of UNOCA. The expectations for this new political mission are very high. It is essential that it focus its efforts on a realistic number of priorities. In that respect, the efforts undertaken to forge quality partnerships with organizations in the region, in particular ECCAS, are most welcome and should be pursued.

Choosing from among the range of regional situations requiring cross-cutting responses, such as maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea or the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), is also desirable, given the limited resources of the Office. We call on UNOCA to increase its collaborative efforts with United Nations missions, primarily the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), as well as with the family of United Nations agencies working on such issues.

In regard to resources, we are grateful to the Gabonese authorities for having provided adequate logistical means to set up the Office, and we encourage continued efforts to identify sources of flexible voluntary funding.

Regarding the Lord's Resistance Army, we roundly condemn the violence and massacres that it has perpetrated over the past 20 years, beginning in Uganda and extending to several Central African countries today. The humanitarian impact, with 440,000 displaced in the most recent period, is enormous and demands a strong and effective response.

We urgently call on LRA combatants to leave that criminal group and to reintegrate into civilian life. We applaud the efforts of MONUSCO in that regard and encourage it to pursue its efforts.

Beyond the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we would like to think about the best way to expand that programme to include all of the countries affected by the LRA, within the limited available resources of UNMISS and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic.

We recall that the International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for the leaders of the LRA and that those warrants must be executed. We encourage the African Union to pursue and accelerate its efforts to respond to that threat. In that regard, we welcome the recent decisions taken by the African Union on the mechanisms to be established to tackle the LRA issue.

We recall the primary responsibility of States in the region to protect their civilians from the LRA, and encourage them to bolster their coordination efforts to that end. Information sharing among the various actors is crucial in effectively fighting the LRA.

In conclusion, we support the draft presidential statement and would like discuss the situation in the region on a regular basis.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): I join others in thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Abou Moussa, for his comprehensive briefing. We are also grateful to Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma and Ambassador Téte António for their very inspiring and constructive contributions to our discussions this morning.

The devastating impact of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) on peace, security and humanitarian activities in the Great Lakes region must not be underestimated. While its operational capacity and cohesiveness have been significantly diminished, its ability to wreak havoc in the affected areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, South Sudan and Uganda remains unhindered.

According to a recent United Nations report, the LRA has killed close to 3,000 people and displaced more than 400,000 since December 2008. The indication is that the LRA has been emboldened by the absence of effective State authority, especially in the affected areas. If we act to overcome the threat posed by the LRA, we must address the critical capacity, institutional gaps and resource constraints inhibiting

the establishment of State authority in the affected areas.

Cooperation and coordination though information sharing and joint operations must be prerequisites for effectively addressing the LRA threat. We therefore welcome the improved cooperation and coordination of operations against the LRA by affected States, as agreed at the second meeting of the defence and security Ministers of the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and South Sudan, held in June. Beyond that, a great deal more needs to be done to enhance the efficiency of joint operations, particularly in the areas of cross-border information, logistics, intelligence and airpower.

We recognize and welcome the regional coordinating role assumed by the African Union (AU) in the fight against the LRA. The establishment of the Integrated Core Planning Team should be expeditiously complemented by the appointment of the AU Special Envoy on the LRA and the establishment of the regional intervention force. The LRA threat also requires enhanced coordination of efforts by the United Nations missions in the region, namely, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic, the United Nations Office in Burundi, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and the various United Nations country teams working in LRA-affected countries.

While we commend the United States for spearheading efforts to counter the LRA, we must state that sustained international, bilateral and multilateral support will remain imperative for the implementation of the comprehensive counter-LRA strategy and the provision of humanitarian assistance to LRA-affected areas.

Turning to the issue of UNOCA, Nigeria welcomes the first report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Mission (S/2011/704). It is encouraging that UNOCA has not only become fully operational but is also working vigorously towards the implementation of its mandate.

We recognize that, through broad consultations, the major security threats undermining sustainable progress in the region have been duly identified. Those threats, namely, the activities of the LRA, cross-border tensions, arms trafficking, terrorism and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, will be more vigorously addressed if the States of the region consistently and faithfully act in concert.

As a country directly affected by the economic and security impact of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, Nigeria welcomes the concern and interest in that great menace. We believe that the fight against piracy and other forms of organized crime is a collective responsibility. We are therefore committed to joining efforts with other member States of the Economic Community of Central African States, the Economic Community of West African States and the Gulf of Guinea Commission to eliminate that threat, especially though the implementation of resolution 2018 (2011). Indeed, our bilateral security arrangement with Benin to patrol our coastal waters is already proving to be an effective deterrent to pirates. We look forward to the forthcoming summit of the Heads of State of the Gulf of Guinea to outline a comprehensive and effective strategy to address the threat.

Nigeria remains unwavering in its efforts to strengthen its relations with the countries of the Central African subregion. That commitment is manifest in our support of UNOCA as it explores opportunities to make contributions to a more peaceful and prosperous future for the countries and the peoples of Central Africa.

We lend our unreserved support to the draft presidential statement prepared by the delegation of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Alzate (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me also to express our delegation's thanks for the briefings by Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa Abou Moussa. Similarly, I wish to express our thanks for the briefings by the Permanent Observer of the African Union and the Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States. I also welcome the presence in the Chamber of the representatives of South Sudan and the Central African Republic.

Colombia is deeply concerned about the hostilities of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) against the populations of the affected countries — the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and Uganda. They show that group's brutality and utter disregard for the most fundamental human rights standards and for

international humanitarian law. Despite the reduced number of soldiers in the Army, the impact and magnitude of its violent attacks on the civilian population continue to be gravely troubling and threaten the security of the affected countries in the Central African region.

Colombia therefore believes it greatly important to continue developing strategies to respond in a coherent way to the challenges posed by that armed group's activities. Those strategies must be based on the principle that the fundamental responsibility to protect civilians falls to the States affected by the presence of the Lord's Resistance Army. The international community's response must therefore be aimed at building national capacities, strengthening institutions and improving the logistical and operational capacities of national security forces. We must also support regional and subregional initiatives to combat this scourge.

At the same time, there is a need for efforts not to be limited to military operations. An effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process is essential, as is as a coordinated strategy on assistance to victims. We must implement concrete steps to improve the quality of life for populations in affected areas through economic and social development.

We stress the importance of developing joint plans and operations based on coordinated cooperation among the security forces of affected States. The international community should promote and encourage a common acknowledgement of the impact of this armed group on the security and well-being of populations as part of an effort to build upon the progress made against the Lord's Resistance Army in all areas affected by its presence. The initiatives adopted by the African Union also deserve our acknowledgment. The broad vision and concrete proposals to establish a regional intervention force, the Joint Information Operations Centre and a joint coordination mechanism provide a framework for coordinating effective regional efforts, which would be greatly bolstered by the African Union's naming of a special envoy for the LRA-affected areas.

Moreover, through the United Nations Office to the African Union, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, United Nations missions in the affected countries and the country teams, the United Nations plays a very important role in developing and implementing efforts to fight the Lord's Resistance Army. Thy should have the necessary logistical and financial means to carry out their assigned tasks. Under the leadership of the States affected, it is essential that the international community make it possible for the legitimate authorities of those States to strengthen the exercise of their sovereignty and gain full control over their territories, in keeping with the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and non-interference the domestic affairs of States.

Moreover, the role of justice in resolving the conflict is another factor we should not lose sight of. In that regard, all States should lend their cooperation in bringing to justice those guilty of the heinous crimes committed by the Lord's Resistance Army and support the officials of affected States and of the International Criminal Court with regard to the cases brought forward against the leaders of the group.

Lastly, we support the draft presidential statement, as we believe that it addresses all of these issues.

Mr. Barbalić (Bosnia and Herzegovina): I would like to express our gratitude to you and your delegation, Mr. President, for initiating this important discussion. I also thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Abou Moussa for his informative briefing. I also express our thanks for the briefings by Mr. Téte António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, and Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma, Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States. We also welcome the presence of the representatives of South Sudan and the Central African Republic at this meeting.

Bosnia and Herzegovina fully supports the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA). We welcome UNOCA's initial steps in facilitating regional initiatives and coordinating the conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities of United Nations entities in the Central African region. UNOCA has an important role to play in assisting the countries of the region to address some of the major challenges to peace and security in that part of Africa and in supporting their efforts to consolidate peace and prevent conflict, as well as to deal with cross-border challenges such as the flow of illicit arms, drug trafficking and organized crime.

We praise the determination of UNOCA to work closely with the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) in tackling serious security challenges in the two subregions. Joint UNOCA and UNOWA efforts will be indispensable in addressing the negative consequences of the Libyan conflict on West and Central Africa.

We are encouraged by the readiness of countries of the region and regional intergovernmental organizations to work with UNOCA in resolving common threats to peace and security, as well as outstanding issues among countries of the region. It is essential that the broader international community continues to support UNOCA to fulfil its mandate and bring peace, security and stability to the Central African region.

UNOCA will play a pivotal role in promoting cooperation among countries of the region on cross-cutting issues, among others, in addressing the issue of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). In that regard, it is vital that UNOCA, as the United Nations regional focal point for the LRA, coordinates United Nations activities with the affected countries at the political level.

We are deeply concerned about the continuing criminal activities of the LRA and its devastating effects on civilian populations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of South Sudan and the Central African Republic. We fully support initiatives and activities undertaken by the United Nations and the African Union to protect civilians and facilitate regional action against the Lord's Resistance Army. We welcome the steps taken by the African Union and affected countries to strengthen cooperation and develop a regional strategy on the LRA.

The establishment of a regional intervention force on the LRA and of centres for sharing information, as well as the appointment of the African Union special envoy on LRA-affected areas, will be important instruments in the process of eliminating that organization and the threats it poses. The implementation of those proposed measures is a matter of urgency. It is vital that the United Nations continues to support the African Union in that regard.

It is important to underline that effective national security forces are an essential element for addressing existing security challenges, including the LRA. The Governments of the affected countries must continue to build their defence and security force capacities in order to provide security and protection for their civilian populations. We welcome international efforts to enhance the military capacities of the countries affected by the LRA. In that context, we commend the United States Government's decision to deploy 100 military personnel to the Central African region in order to assist regional forces.

Finally, due consideration must be given to effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes for those associated with the LRA. We believe that efforts aimed at strengthening the capacities and reach of State authorities, alongside proactive DDR programmes combined with other non-military means, can contribute significantly to effectively combating the LRA.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): I thank you for holding this important meeting, Mr. President. I also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Abou Moussa, for his informative briefing on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and on actions to address the threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). I also thank Mr. Téte António and Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma for their presentations, and welcome the presence at our meeting of the Permanent Representatives of the Central African Republic and South Sudan.

Brazil reiterates its confidence that UNOCA can foster a stronger relationship between the United Nations and the countries of Central Africa, as well as better coordination with regional and subregional organizations. Brazil commends UNOCA for having already improved coordination within the United Nations system in Central Africa. One good example of that is the recent initiative of bringing together representatives of the Organization in the region to discuss how the United Nations can increase synergies and better support the Economic Community of Central African States. We also value the fact that the Office has included in its agenda the development of an integrated approach in the field of peacebuilding, which we believe is indispensable to ensuring sustainable peace in the region.

We encourage the Office to continue to consider ways of mainstreaming United Nations support for electoral processes in the region, especially with regard

to facilitating political dialogue, mediation and technical assistance. It is encouraging that UNOCA has begun to cooperate with countries of the region in security matters. Support for regional initiatives to control the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in Central Africa is most welcome.

The international community should spare no effort in assisting Central African countries in finding a lasting solution to the LRA threat. If such an endeavour is to succeed, Brazil believes that a threefold policy must be pursued. This involves, first, lending full support to all the regional initiatives under the auspices of the African Union, with a view to assisting the countries concerned in developing a common strategy for tackling the LRA.

Secondly, it involves striving to develop a more holistic approach, including actions to consolidate State authority in isolated regions. This means stepping up support for peacebuilding activities, with a focus on improving national capacities, infrastructure and access to basic services in the areas most affected by LRA attacks.

Thirdly, the United Nations and countries in the region should continue to strengthen disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, including through the use of mass communications such as radio, with a view to stimulating further defections from the LRA ranks. It is also worth recalling that military operations against the group must be planned in accordance with international humanitarian and human rights law in order to avoid further suffering for the civilian population.

The creation and functioning of UNOCA reassures us that the United Nations will continue to enhance its dialogue and cooperation with Central African countries in order to help them attain sustainable peace, security and development. Brazil pledges its full support for this process.

Mr. Assaf (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Abou Moussa for his valuable statement and for his efforts in leading the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA). I would also like to thank Ambassador Téte António and Mr. Sylvain-Goma for their briefings.

We have had the pleasure of hearing Mr. Moussa say that the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) is carrying out its role in full, justifying the hopes that we have placed in it, particularly given the current situation in Central Africa. In that regard, we are grateful to Gabon for hosting the Office and helping it function well. We commend the Special Representative's visits to the region and for his preparations for the 33rd ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, to be held at early next month in Bangui.

We affirm the importance of UNOCA's responsibility for improving cooperation in Central Africa with regional organizations such as the Economic Community of Central African States, as well as with United Nations agencies and missions in the region, in order to strengthen stability and security, to combat piracy in Equatorial Guinea and repercussions from the Libyan crisis — including weapons trafficking and incursions by armed combatants — to promote the role of women, and to mitigate the impact of economic and other crises, which is particularly important. We emphasize the Office's importance as an instrument of preventive diplomacy and as an effective and affordable resource for preventing conflicts in that strategically important part of the world.

As an institution with regional dimensions, the Office is genuinely needed in fighting the dangers posed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in four countries. We reiterate our condemnation of that armed group's attacks on civilians, occupation and terrorization of villages, and use of various methods of violence and intimidation, including the abduction of women and children, which has led to internal displacement or refugee status for hundreds of thousands and to the suffering of many in the region.

In that regard, we call for more regional coordination and international cooperation in putting an end to the LRA's bloody attacks. We welcome the meeting held under United Nations auspices in Kinshasa on 29 and 30 September, which brought together the Chiefs of Defence Staff of the four countries concerned. We encourage the African Union to expedite the implementation of its regional coordinated strategy for combating the LRA, the appointment of a special envoy, and the establishment of the regional intervention force and the joint operations centre. All of this should dovetail with intensified efforts to deal with the roots of the problem by encouraging combatants to lay down their arms and

return to society. We can only commend the efforts of the various United Nations missions in the countries of the region to help civilians and end the dangers posed by the LRA.

Finally, we would like to thank the mission of the United Kingdom for having prepared the draft presidential statement, which we support.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): I will begin by thanking the Secretary-General and the Department of Political Affairs for their reports (S/2011/693 and S/2011/704, respectively). I also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Abou Moussa, for his briefing.

I would like to welcome the Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations and our colleagues from the Central African Republic and South Sudan.

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) is one of the most brutal terrorist organizations on the planet. Its leaders, including Joseph Kony, Okot Odhiambo and Dominic Ongwen, all under indictment by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity, continue to hold hundreds of abductees hostage, forcing them to loot, rape and kill. There is no ambiguity here; the LRA's continued activity is an affront to human dignity and a stain on our collective conscience.

The United States Congress and President Obama have responded. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General and graciously mentioned by the Ambassador of Gabon this morning, President Obama announced last month that the United Nations would deploy a small number of military personnel to the LRA-affected region, in consultation with host Governments, to act as advisers to regional militaries pursuing the LRA. That deployment is in line with the LRA Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act, which was passed last year by our Congress with widespread bipartisan support.

Sending American personnel in a non-combat capacity crystallizes the United States commitment to supporting regional partners and ending this threat. Our advisers will work to enhance the capacity of regional militaries to coordinate and fuse intelligence with effective operational planning. United States forces will not engage in direct action against the LRA, but they will be equipped for self-defence.

The United States notes the importance of the continued leadership and cooperation of the regional Governments in this effort. Over recent years, regional militaries have worked together to pursue the LRA across a vast area of dense jungle. They have had some success in reducing the LRA's numbers and keeping them from regrouping.

The United States is committed to working with the Governments of the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of South Sudan and Uganda, as well as the African Union (AU) and the United Nations, to end the threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army. We hope that, with our enhanced support, they will be able to make a final push to bring an end to this long-standing problem.

We will be working to ensure that protection of civilians is incorporated into operational planning. We are encouraged to hear that once again the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) will be taking proactive steps, as it did last year, to ensure civilian protection over the Christmas period, given that massacres have occurred previously at that time.

As we work together to increase military pressure on the LRA, we also believe that there should be a renewed push to get LRA fighters and abductees to escape and defect. In the last month, some 30 women and children have left the organization's ranks in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They are receiving food, medical attention and transportation assistance to return home and reunite with their families. Several of them are already at rehabilitation centres in Uganda, where they are receiving support to reintegrate into society.

MONUSCO has done excellent work in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to encourage and facilitate LRA defections, but no organization is yet playing a similar role across the border in the Central African Republic and South Sudan. We encourage the United Nations to work with regional Governments and other relevant United Nations missions to address these gaps and develop a coordinated regional approach to encourage LRA defections. The AU, through its Special Envoy, can also play an important role in this area.

The United States fully supports the important work of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) in the Central African subregion. We commend Special Representative of the Secretary-General Moussa for his efforts in standing up UNOCA's operations and embarking on a very ambitious and substantive diplomatic agenda. We encourage UNOCA's continued efforts to enhance the coordination of United Nations missions working in the region and advance cooperation with regional organizations, including ECCAS and the AU. We hope that UNOCA will work to establish a clear structure with focal points in all of the United Nations missions in the LRA-affected area as well as the United Nations Office to the African Union to help ensure better coordination in information-sharing.

We join regional Governments in calling on the remaining members of the LRA to disarm peacefully, go home and take advantage of offers of reintegration support. As President Obama said a year ago upon signing the LRA Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act: "We mourn those killed; we pray for those abducted to be freed; we call on the ranks of the LRA to disarm and surrender".

Finally, we support the draft presidential statement, which we hope will be adopted shortly.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Abou Moussa for his briefing and Ambassador António and the Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States for their respective statements.

At present, the situation in Central Africa as a whole is stable, but many challenges still exist in connection with maintaining and consolidating peace and achieving the sustainable development of the economy. The volatile situation in neighbouring regions has negatively affected regional security development and the humanitarian situation. Transnational organized crime and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons constitute a grave threat to regional security.

Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea has seriously affected regional economic activities and navigational safety. China expresses its concern in that respect. We are in favour of regional countries strengthening their cooperation in a joint effort to address the threats and challenges.

Since its creation, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) has actively carried out the Security Council's mandate by strengthening communication with the affected countries and regional organizations and improving coordination within the United Nations system, working actively to maintain regional peace and security and promote economic and social development in the countries of the region. China expresses its appreciation in this regard.

We hope that UNOCA will build upon the activities it has carried out so far, formally seek and respect the views of the affected countries; keep up the good work in the area of communication and coordination; and enhance the relevant efforts of the United Nations system, the countries of the region and regional organizations so as to create synergies and make the necessary contributions to lasting peace and stability in the region.

Recently the LRA has repeatedly crossed over the borders between the affected countries to commit atrocities, committed violations against the safety and security of civilians and created a grave humanitarian crisis. China expresses its grave concern in this regard. We strongly condemn the LRA for its attacks on the Government forces of the affected countries and its violations against civilians. We call on the LRA to lay down its arms immediately, cease all violence and hostilities and accept disarmament.

The ultimate resolution of the LRA problem will require close cooperation among countries of the region, the support of regional organizations, and the vigorous assistance of the international community. We welcome the African Union's efforts to formulate an integrated strategy to resolve the LRA problem, and appreciate the practical measures and cooperation undertaken by the countries of the region.

China calls on the international community to maintain its support of the efforts of the African Union and countries of the region to combat the LRA. We appreciate the Secretariat's dispatch of a mission to the affected countries to assess the situation on the ground. We expect the Secretary-General and the relevant United Nations agencies to maintain their practical support to the affected countries in order to help them to build their own capacities, promote economic and social development on the ground, improve the

humanitarian situation and play a positive role in the due resolution of the LRA problem.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): We thank you, Sir, and your delegation for having organized this important meeting. My delegation wishes also to join in thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Abou Moussa, for his comprehensive briefing on the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). We also thank the Permanent Observer of the African Union (AU) to the United Nations, Ambassador Téte António, and the Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Mr. Sylvain-Goma, for their comprehensive statements. My delegation welcomes the participation of the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic and the representative of South Sudan in this debate.

Allow me to focus my statement first on the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of UNOCA (S/2011/704). We welcome the fact that UNOCA has become fully operational, and are pleased to learn of the extensive consultations that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General has carried out with the States of the region, regional bodies, civil society formations, UN-Women and relevant United Nations agencies since assuming his duties. South Africa is encouraged by the level of cooperation between the three United Nations offices, including the exchange of staff between UNOCA and the United Nations Office for West Africa. We thank the Government of Gabon for the support it continues to provide to UNOCA.

The challenges confronting the Central Africa States — such as piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, drug trafficking, the proliferation of illicit weapons and the continued threat of the LRA — are transnational in nature. The role of UNOCA will therefore be crucial in assisting the United Nations in developing a regional approach and strategy for the Central Africa States. Given the nature of the socio-economic and security challenges, the role of UNOCA in collaborating with individual United Nations missions and country teams will be important in developing complementarities for the United Nations entities in the region and for addressing the development and security challenges confronting the region.

One of the key mandates of UNOCA is to build institutional capacity and harmonize subregional approaches to peace and security. We are of the view that UNOCA has a critical role to play in contributing to peace and security in the region through mediation and the provision of good offices, among other things. We welcome the working relationship established between UNOCA and ECCAS. We further welcome UNOCA's assumption of the secretariat functions of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. The convening of the 33rd ministerial meeting of the Committee on 5 and 6 December will be an important platform for developing a regional geopolitical approach to security-related developments in the subregion.

Turning to the LRA, my delegation continues to be concerned about the devastating effects of that armed group and its ongoing activities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, South Sudan and the Central African Republic. The brutality of those activities continues to haunt thousands of innocent civilians, including women and children. UNOCA's plan to devote increased attention to and focus on the peace and security challenges faced by women and children is a welcome step towards the resolution of the challenges. In that regard, UNOCA has an important mandate to work with the United Nations peacekeeping missions in the affected areas, the United Nations Office to the African Union and the African Union itself in order to facilitate cooperation and counter the threat posed by the LRA.

South Africa welcomes the ongoing military cooperation between the countries affected by LRA activities in addressing this challenge. In particular, my delegation welcomes the regional strategy developed in June at the African Union 2nd Regional Ministerial Meeting on the Lord's Resistance Army. The strategy includes the establishment of a regional intervention force, a joint operations centre and a joint coordination mechanism. In that regard, we welcome the call made by the African Union Peace and Security Council on 27 September for the Commission to provide a report on the implementation modalities for this regional cooperation initiative so as to enable it to authorize the envisaged cooperation. We welcome the decision of the AU to appoint a special envoy for the LRA.

We further recall the request of the AU Assembly in July for the United Nations and other AU partners to provide timely financial and logistical support.

Important in that regard is the decision made at the 2nd Regional Meeting that "support should be coordinated by the AU Commission but should not be prejudicial to any existing bilateral arrangements between the countries concerned and partners".

My delegation welcomes the readiness and commitment expressed by the Secretary-General to support the regional strategy of the AU through the United Nations presence in the region. We are of the view that the United Nations peacekeeping missions, including the good offices of the Secretary-General, have an important role to play in building the capacities of States of the region through training, the provision of logistical support and information-sharing. To that end, this approach will deliver more effective support to dialogue and peacebuilding efforts on the ground. South Africa wishes to underscore that the military operations against the LRA should be part of a broader strategy that includes, inter alia, the granting of amnesty, policies for facilitating defections and reintegration, and the arrest of LRA commanders indicted by the International Criminal Court.

Finally, my delegation wishes to express its appreciation for the work done by Special Representative Abou Moussa and his team, and wishes him well in his ongoing endeavours. If UNOCA is to be able to implement all these plans and programmes for the region, it is important that it be allocated the resources it requires. My delegation supports the presidential statement to be adopted by the Council later today.

Mr. Zhukov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Abou Moussa for his informative briefing on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and the situation in the region with respect to the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). We listened with interest to the statements made by the Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States and the Permanent Observer of the African Union.

We are pleased to note some recent progress in the consolidation of democratic processes and in the organization of the work of State institutions in a number of countries of Central Africa. The situation in some conflict zones is being normalized.

However, there are obvious factors militating against stability in the region, including the growth in the scope of organized crime, banditry and armed violence, and the deterioration of the humanitarian and human rights situations. Moreover, new, common regional problems are emerging. We share the conclusions of the Secretary-General's report (S/2011/704) concerning the need for active efforts to avert the regional proliferation of the consequences of the Libyan crisis, including preventing the illegal flow of weapons and combatants.

A comprehensive approach is required to curb the criminal activity of the LRA in the region and to identify solutions to the problem of piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea. In that regard, there is a growing need for UNOCA to develop a comprehensive approach to preventing conflicts, ensuring peace and security, peacebuilding and promoting economic integration and sustainable development throughout Central Africa. We see UNOCA as a key link in the work of the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in that part of the African continent. Strengthening the coordination of their efforts will help us to meet the challenge of enhancing the effectiveness and success of their work and will redound to the benefit of the States and peoples of the subregion.

We agree with the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the issue of the LRA (S/2011/693). Despite the fact that, thanks to the joint efforts of countries in the region, it has been possible to significantly reduce the military capability of that armed group, the LRA continues to remain a serious destabilizing factor in remote and regions of difficult access in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and South Sudan.

We are deeply concerned about the truly terrorist nature of the LRA's actions. We welcome the increased efforts of and developing coordination and interaction among the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, the Central African Republic and South Sudan in countering that threat. We support the development of a coordinated strategy within the African Union to combat LRA initiatives and to establish a joint mechanism to respond to the issue. In our view, such steps should become systemic, with the active support of the international community and UNOCA's political coordination.

We are convinced that the LRA issue is unlikely to be resolved solely by military means. All prior

military operations against that group have not helped to eliminate the threat. We must maintain a comprehensive cross-cutting approach. Along with keeping up military pressure, the challenge of encouraging LRA members to voluntarily disarm and of demobilizing, repatriating and reintegrating them remains relevant. Certainly, strengthening State authority institutions, national security and law enforcement bodies and economic development in the regions affected by the group's activities would help address the issue. Of course, in the conduct of military operations to deactivate the LRA, priority attention must be given to the protection of civilians.

We are grateful to the United Kingdom delegation for preparing the draft presidential statement for the Council, which we support.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Portugal.

At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Abou Moussa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for a very comprehensive briefing on the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), and also Mr. Sylvain-Goma, Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States, and Ambassador Téte António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, for their important statements to the Council. I also welcome the presence of the Permanent Representatives of the Central African Republic and South Sudan.

The Lord's Resistance Army has committed atrocities across Central Africa for too long. Portugal strongly condemns the continued violations of international humanitarian and human rights law by the LRA, including the use of brutal tactics that include the deliberate recruitment and use of children, killing, maiming, rape, sexual violence and abductions. We firmly urge the LRA to put an end to those practices and to release all abductees.

Over the years, the Governments of the region, with the assistance of the international community, have taken steps aimed at ending the threat posed by the group. As a result, the LRA has seen its numbers reduced significantly. However, regardless of its current small number, the LRA remains capable of having a terrible impact on the civilian population, thus threatening regional stability. It is therefore crucial that all actors — the Governments of LRA-affected countries, the African Union (AU), the United Nations and other international, regional and bilateral partners — continue to engage until the threat is removed. We are very much encouraged by the renewed attention that the AU and the United Nations, including the Council, are giving to the issue, which now needs to be sustained and translated into further action.

We commend the important efforts undertaken by the armed forces of the four LRA-affected countries to counter the threat posed by that group, as well as other initiatives by the international community, in coordination with the United Nations and the AU, to work with the military of those countries. However, there is room for further improving the effectiveness of those efforts, particularly through enhancing coordination, cooperation and information-sharing among the different actors, including both the States in the region and the United Nations missions. We believe that the United Nations is well positioned to lead the in-depth process, in coordination with the AU.

The African Union's efforts to implement the regional cooperation initiative on the LRA must, on the other hand, be supported by the international community. In that regard, we highlight the importance of the rapid appointment of a special envoy. At the same time, we must bear in mind that, in order to effectively counter the LRA threat, we must increase international and regional efforts, under United Nations leadership, in coordination with the AU, to support the affected countries in protecting their civilian populations. That means increasing not only initiatives that support capacity-building, good governance and the rule of law, but also very concrete improvements regarding relevant communications infrastructures, which will have a considerable impact on the safety of local communities.

In parallel, the international community, the United Nations and the AU need to reassess ways to improve the provision of humanitarian and development assistance to the populations of LRA-affected areas. Humanitarian organizations can play a very important role in that context and must be encouraged to strengthen their presence in those areas. At the same time, their presence has an important deterrent effect on LRA attacks, and therefore again contributes to the safety of local communities.

Another important action to counter LRA activities is to intensify messages urging LRA fighters to defect and promoting disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and resettlement or repatriation programmes. Consistent messaging reaching all LRA-operating areas must be expanded. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has made progress in that regard, but similar programmes should be developed in South Sudan and the Central African Republic.

I will conclude on the LRA by underlining once again the importance of sustaining the engagement of the Security Council on the issue. The recent developments to combat LRA activity are encouraging and should continue. The draft presidential statement to be adopted today, the first since that of 2006 (see S/PRST/2006/29), is another step. It sends a strong signal to LRA leaders, on the one hand, and to the civilians living in LRA-affected areas, on the other. It ensures that the Council will continue to follow the issue closely. Portugal will spare no efforts in continuing to mobilize the international community and to improve the United Nations response to that scourge.

Turning now to UNOCA, whose work so far seems very encouraging, as stated in the recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/704), particularly considering that the Office was only established in January. With regard to the LRA, which is the main issue linking the two comprehensive briefings that we had the opportunity to hear today, UNOCA can play a very important role in facilitating cooperation among the various United Nations entities present in the region, the AU and the LRA-affected countries in order to counter the LRA threat.

Furthermore, we believe that UNOCA's work will contribute significantly to enhancing United Nations engagement towards the achievement of peace and security in Central Africa, namely, through providing a focal point for United Nations engagement, helping to build the institutional capacity of countries in the region, and supporting regional efforts to address cross-cutting issues of concern. The importance of UNOCA continuing to develop its activities, in close coordination with the Economic Community of Central African States, must be highlighted. In that regard, the participation of the Secretary-General of that regional organization in today's meeting is a very positive and encouraging sign.

We must commend the ongoing efforts undertaken by UNOCA, in coordination with the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) and regional and international partners, regarding the relevant security challenges with great impact not only on the West and Central Africa subregions, but also on the entire international community, such as piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and illicit flows of arms and fighters. The joint UNOCA-UNOAU initiative to promote an integrated United Nations response to the negative consequences of the recent conflict in Libya in West and Central Africa is another project that should be developed and encouraged.

I conclude by reiterating strong support for the innovative efforts of UNOCA addressed at helping to prevent the emergence of new conflicts, resolving existing ones by peaceful means and promoting democratic and accountable governance in the subregion of the Central Africa.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Central African Republic.

Mr. Doubane (Central African Republic): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the leading organ of the United Nations. I would also like to thank and congratulate the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA). I also commend, and express my gratitude for the quality of, the briefing by the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, as well as for the outstanding statement by the Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States.

The question that brings us together today is of major importance for my country, the Central African Republic. Mine is a State that faces many internal challenges and, since 2008, has been in the throes of an external rebellion. We are still asking ourselves today what the motive and justification is for that barbarous aggression. To tell the truth, the only fault of my country — which does not share a border with Uganda, I might add — is merely that we are living on our own territory in peace. In talking today about transnational or transborder terrorism, our specific case provides a perfect illustration. One morning in March 2008, heavily armed men, coming from who knows where,

arrived, pillaged, burned, raped, murdered and forcibly enlisted men to carry off the spoils of war and later to become soldiers. They also recruited women to become sexual slaves and children to become child soldiers.

Villages that not long ago were genuine havens of peace and breadbaskets for major towns suddenly became emptied of their populations, who fled the insecurity and now live in a situation of unprecedented precariousness. Like internally displaced persons in makeshift shelters, thousands today depend on the generosity of international institutions, organizations and charitable humanitarian groups, both national and international. It would not be going too far to point out that to that we must add the thousands of Congolese refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo spread out over the two towns of Zemio and Obo.

The insecurity created in the area, which is quite far from Bangui, accentuates poverty, which is already a source of concern in a country facing great difficulties. For three years now, the Central African Republic, a fragile, post-conflict State whose defence and security forces are undergoing restructuring with limited resources, while also fighting internal rebellions and highwaymen, has deployed three platoons to the area to track those bandits. However, we have not been able to completely neutralize those criminals, who are spread out in the prefectures of Upper Mbomou, Mbomou and Upper Kotto, in the far eastern part of the Central African Republic.

Exercising its right of pursuit, with the agreement of the Government of the Central African Republic, a unit from the Ugandan defence forces has been deployed and is carrying out joint patrols with Central African Republic forces in that eastern part of our vast territory.

For some time now, the African Union, the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries, the Economic Community of Central African States and, recently, the United Nations through UNOCA, have been holding increasing numbers of meetings to jointly consider what collective and coordinated efforts could be undertaken to find a comprehensive solution. We very much welcome that and thank those partners for all of their initiatives. I would like to take this opportunity to express to France the gratitude of the people and the Government of the Central African Republic for the many forms of support it has provided the Forces armées centrafricainesus in our struggle for peace in this corner of our country.

The Central African Republic very much welcomes and appreciates the recent involvement of the United States of America through its President, Mr. Barack Obama, who, through a courageous decision on 21 October, fully committed himself to this cause by sending 100 personnel to strengthen the operational capacity of the soldiers of the four States of the subregion in order to provide greater effectiveness in the fight against one of the most cruel barbarities of our time. I can say that this is already producing positive effects in the subregion. We would be all the more pleased if that commitment could inspire other partners that have until now been silent — indeed sceptical — to join our ranks in this just fight.

Before I conclude my statement, I would like to point out that my fellow citizens — men, women and children — face many challenges, including threats to peace and stability and the daily and ongoing fight against poverty. Mr. Kony, his movement and his horde of criminals are hampering our progress in this just and legitimate battle. The Central African Republic reaffirms its commitment, here as elsewhere, to ensuring that as long as that rebellion exists on our territory, we will not let down our guard, much less spare any effort in this battle.

However, the regional nature of this scourge makes all isolated action complex and ineffective. That is why we must mobilize commitment, forces and resources in order to act together to once and for all prevent the LRA from carrying out these crimes and atrocities with impunity against innocent people who only aspire to live in peace, security and dignity through the fruits of their labours.

The President: Following consultations among Council members, I have been authorized to make the following statement on their behalf:

> "The Security Council strongly condemns the ongoing attacks carried out by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in parts of Central Africa, which pose a continuing threat to regional security. The Council reiterates its grave concern at the atrocities committed by the LRA, which have serious humanitarian and human rights consequences, including the displacement of over 440,000 people across the region. The Council remains deeply concerned that its previous calls

for the LRA to cease its attacks have not been heeded.

"The Security Council strongly condemns the continued violations of international humanitarian law and the abuses of human rights by the LRA. The Security Council condemns further the recruitment and use of children, killing and maiming, rape, sexual slavery and other sexual violence, and abductions. The Council demands an immediate end to all attacks by the LRA, particularly those on civilians, urges LRA leaders to release all those abducted, and insists that all LRA elements put an end to such practices, and surrender and disarm.

"The Security Council encourages the remaining LRA fighters to leave the group's ranks and take advantage of offers of reintegration support. Over the course of the LRA's existence, more than 12,000 combatants and abductees have left the LRA's ranks and have been integrated and reunited with their families through Uganda's Amnesty Commission. The Security Council emphasizes its support for continued efforts across the affected countries to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate former LRA fighters back into normal life, and notes the recent successful escape of 30 women and children from two LRA groups on the border between the Republic of South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Council acknowledges the important ongoing efforts of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement office to encourage and facilitate further LRA defections, and requests that the United Nations work with regional Governments to expand these efforts across the LRA-affected region.

"The Security Council commends the important efforts undertaken by the militaries of the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of South Sudan and Uganda to address the threat posed by the LRA, and urges those militaries to coordinate and concert their efforts to apprehend Joseph Kony and LRA top commanders in the coming months and bring them to justice. The Council recognizes the challenges the Governments in the region face, and welcomes efforts by the international community, in coordination with the African Union and United Nations, to enhance the capacity of regional militaries to conduct effective operations against LRA top commanders and better protect civilians; it notes, for example, the efforts by the United States to work with regional militaries. The Council underlines the need for all action against the LRA to be conducted in compliance with applicable international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law.

"The Security Council commends the enhanced engagement of the African Union (AU) on this issue through its regional cooperation initiative for the elimination of the LRA, and its efforts to establish a regional intervention force, a joint operations centre and a joint coordination mechanism.

"The Security Council further commends the support provided by the United Nations Secretary-General to the AU Commission through the planning process and encourages the AU to promote coordination on LRA issues by sharing its counter-LRA plans at the earliest opportunity. The Council urges the prompt appointment of the proposed African Union Special Envoy for the LRA-affected areas, and expresses hope that this official will work quickly to solidify cooperation between regional Governments and promote a regional framework for the defection, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of LRA fighters.

"The Security Council underlines the primary responsibility of States in the LRA-affected region to protect civilians and calls upon them to take all appropriate measures in this regard. The Council notes at the same time the important role being played by United Nations missions in the region, particularly through the adoption of protection measures such as community liaison, and stresses the need for them to play a major role in the coordination among all those engaged in addressing the threat posed by the LRA.

"The Council requests that MONUSCO and the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) seek, within their

mandates and capabilities, to increase protection activities in LRA-affected areas over coming months, with a particular focus on the communities that are most vulnerable. The Council also welcomes the increased focus of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic on LRA issues in the Central African Republic and encourages further action by the United Nations to address the needs of LRA-affected communities in the Central African Republic.

"The Security Council encourages all United Nations offices and missions in the LRA-affected region to continue to enhance information-sharing and coordination with all relevant actors, and welcomes the preparation of a regional human rights report on the LRA.

"The Council commends efforts by the European Union, the United States and other donors to provide humanitarian assistance to LRA-affected populations in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of South Sudan. The Council stresses the need for an enhanced, comprehensive and more regional approach to the humanitarian situation, including assistance to victims of sexual violence and other attacks, and reiterates the requirement for all parties to promote and ensure safe and unhindered access for humanitarian organizations to the civilian population. The Council calls upon the international community to provide support to capacity-building, good governance and humanitarian efforts in LRA-affected areas.

"The Security Council welcomes the Secretary-General's report on the LRA (S/2011/693) and commends the efforts made by the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), in coordination with United Nations Office to the African Union, to engage with the United Nations missions in the LRA-affected region, the AU and affected Central African States to facilitate cooperation on issues related to countering the threat posed by the LRA.

"The Security Council encourages UNOCA to work with the United Nations missions and the AU to develop a regional strategy for international humanitarian, development and peacebuilding assistance in the LRA-affected area, enhanced cross-border mechanisms to improve civilian protection, early warning capacity, humanitarian access and response, and appropriate reintegration support for those returning from displacement, abductees and ex-combatants, as well as strengthening the overall capacity of affected States to extend their authority throughout their respective territories.

"The Security Council recalls the International Criminal Court's arrest warrants for three remaining LRA leaders on charges of, among other things, war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, rape and the enlistment of children through abduction, and encourages all States to cooperate with the Ugandan authorities and the International Criminal Court in order to implement those warrants and to bring to justice those responsible for the atrocities.

"The Council recalls its statement of June 2006 (S/PRST/2006/28) and reaffirms the vital importance of promoting justice and the rule of law, including respect for human rights, as an indispensible element for lasting peace.

"The Security Council requests that the Secretary-General keep it informed on developments in relation to the LRA, including through a single report on both UNOCA and the LRA to be submitted before 31 May 2012, identifying opportunities for improved information-sharing between the AU, LRA-affected States and United Nations missions, and outlining the role of UNOCA in coordinating activity against the LRA."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2011/21.

I now give the floor to Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma, Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States, to respond to comments and questions raised.

Mr. Sylvain-Goma (*spoke in French*): As I stated in my introductory comments, I have reserved the right to take the floor on the question of working relations, cooperation and partnership with the United Nations

Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), which has just opened in Libreville.

We have all read the report (S/2011/704) and followed the questions to which it has given rise. I will not address all of those issues, which include the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), small arms and light weapons under the Kinshasa Convention, drug trafficking, maritime security, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, elections, and general capacity-building. The Office has effected productive changes in those areas. I note that the secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) welcomes Mr. Moussa's enthusiasm in addressing those matters with the main actors from ECCAS.

Clearly the issues are numerous. We agree that change is necessary in order to define our priorities and to consolidate our efforts in order to enable successful implementation of the measures available. In particular, I wish to emphasize one issue which is as important as the LRA file, and which has been addressed by the Council in resolution 2018 (2011). The Gulf of Guinea deserves the full, sustained attention that the Council can provide to it in the months and years ahead. It is important that information on this matter be provided on an updated basis from ECCAS on how it is being addressed.

In December 2009, our Heads of States signed a protocol to protect vital maritime interests of ECCAS members in the Gulf of Guinea. The strategic approach of our Heads of States emphasizes that security must involve the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX) and promote synergy with the Gulf of Guinea Commission and the Economic Community of West African States. I welcome the fact that resolution 2018 (2011) is perfectly aligned with the concerns I have mentioned and thus bodes well for the future.

I will not reiterate our objectives; I simply wished to make a few comments on how we have set up our machinery. We have three zones: in Zone A we have Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with Angola as the pilot State; in Zone B, we have the Republic of the Congo and the Cabinda area of Angola, with the Republic of the Congo as the pilot; and then we have Zone D, with Cameroun, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, São Tomé and Principe, with Cameroun as the pilot State.

Within that structure, a centre will be established in Pointe-Noire in the Republic of the Congo, called the Centre for the Maintenance of Maritime Security, which will have links with the most important strategic agencies. We will place a coordinating maritime centre in each pilot State. Of course, concerns regarding the financing and operation of this machinery have been addressed. Without imposing new taxes, we will rely on levies collected through maritime operators, above all via the Maritime Organization of West and Central Africa. I should add that, in terms of implementation, we have activated the space of zone D, which consists, as I said, of Cameroun, Gabon, São Tomé and Principe and Equatorial Guinea. That will subsequently pave the way for the plan adopted by the four military chiefs of staff of those four States and, of course, approved by their respective higher authorities, and for assessing the results of the first phase of the maritime security plan and then for implementing phase two. We are encouraged by the results to date. I wish therefore to say that the timing of resolution 2018 (2011) gives us further impetus to build on the initiatives of the East African Community (EAC), so much so that phase two has already begun, namely, by building synergy with the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS). We thank the United States for making their facilities at Garmisch, Germany, available, which enabled the chiefs of staff, their representatives, the heads of the communities and the two parties to come together to craft a model for the kind of synergy that should exist between ECOWAS and the Economic Community of Central African States. I believe that their observations were useful once certain initiatives had been launched to ensure that the safety of roads and of the Gulf of Guinea could be guaranteed, lest the situation sink into the sort of case we know all too well and might call "Somalization". I would like to thank all States for their support, along with all the institutions such as the European Union and the United Nations system that have responded to our concerns.

The President: I thank Mr. Sylvain-Goma for the clarifications he has provided. There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12:45 p.m.